

Michael Parenti: The Sword & the Dollar

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<http://www.michaelparenti.org/> Michael Parenti discusses the history of imperialism, the forced maldevelopment of the third world, and the violence that is integral to it all. WARNING: Talk contains graphic descriptions of torture

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flourish man's bride Logies I ride in this wind on my good horse I call you my shiny black bears to the Playhouse saw told you to take the bride's silver and gold you had tea from somebody you're listening to unwelcome guests on weo s geneva 90.3 and 89.7 FM i'm lynne gary today's broadcast will focus on the actual purpose of US military activity and expenditure abroad and it's splendid success in the caribbean and central america its creation a pool a slave labor that can undermine the wages of US workers while reaping enormous profits for transnational corporations in our first hour we'll continue with our lecture series by dr. Michael Parenti his talk today the sword and the dollar in the second hour we'll hear from teenage workers in El Salvador and Haiti about how little they earn and eat your average finger lakes cow lives better than they do and we'll hear from one of the survivors of a massacre in a Guatemalan village whose people were killed wholesale to make way for a World Bank sponsored dam project built to provide electricity for maquiladoras in the city what you hear in today's program will outrage and disgust you but this is about more than feeling compassion for someone far away our fates are tied to there's half a million US apparel jobs have been lost to these

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US apparel jobs have been lost to these macula Dory's as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement NAFTA and corporations are using their ability to export labor to force Americans to work harder for less last New Year's Eve I was coming home every way it was 2 a.m. really cold and snowing hard we pulled off at a gas station on the Weedsport exit there was an old man in a beat-up car delivering newspapers in the cold and dark the old man looked like a guy who worked hard all his life and here he was working for peanuts in the cold of New Year's Eve sadly this guy probably thought he was doing honest work it's not honest when people's lives are spent in labor that enriches others and leaves them poor that is criminal if you're old enough to remember the 60s you may recall the glowing predictions of futurists that automation and technology would create a future filled with leisure and prosperity this has come to pass but only for a tiny minority the rest of us are working harder for less the fact is that less workers are needed due to technological advancements and so prisons are being built at an accelerating rate to return that surplus humanity to profitability as slave laborers working for a fraction of the minimum wage and our hoodwinked people keep falling for the tough-on-crime rhetoric the people imprisoned for murder rate and other violence represent a minority of prisoners two-thirds of the people in prison are there on nonviolent drug convictions and many of the others are simply poor who knows how many thousands have committed no crime at all but are there simply because they are poor young and black and have been framed to beef up the arrest statistics of corrupt police forces and the corporate bosses laugh all the way to the bank this program is actually a class and learning to read between the

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class and learning to read between the lines of the lies our so-called leaders spout by the end of this course you will gain a different understanding about what is meant by defending democracy tough on crime or on drugs economic empowerment zone and free trade now dr. Michael for rent welcome to people's video/audio a series of talks by author and political analyst Michael Parenti his books include democracy for the few land of idols political mythology in America and against Empire the topic of today's talk is the sword and the dollar the history of imperialism and the force maldevelopment of the third world it was given in Marin California February 1994 here's Michael Parenti Central America as you know like most of the third world is suffering from acute poverty and economic stagnation and this is called under development and this under development is treated in academia and in the media and by government officials elsewhere as an original historical condition it's something that that was always there it's due to the poverty of the land the climate makes people lazy I learned that when I was a kid I remember teachers saying that people in the warmer climates just don't work as hard as we do you know mañana mañana and all that whereas we in the temperate climates we work hard it's due to overpopulation they have too many children and it's due to cultural backwardness these are the reasons given the reasons given to explain poverty in the third world are the same as the reasons given to explain poverty in the United States itself except the climatic one with all these others are lazy too many kids blood buy the other thing in fact the lands of Central America are

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fact the lands of Central America are very rich lands the lands of the third-world throughout Asia Africa Latin America that's why the Europeans went through all the trouble to go there to steal and plunder and settle them in fact these warm climates have produced ancient and magnificent civilizations back when the Europeans was still hunting pigs with sticks they were great civilizations in places in fact they're more overpopulated today they're more overpopulated today than they were in the earliest centuries before the Europeans came so overpopulation is more a result of under development than a cause in fact that cultural backwardness you know that is that's a theme that's as old as Columbus he was using it to justify enslaving people the eye look of the people in the 16th century and I said the Europeans had supremacy really cultural supremacy in just two areas one was the whole area of navigational transportation and the other was in the instruments of war and armaments and firepower and it was that superior firepower not superior civilization that brought them to the positions of supremacy that they are in now through the centuries of colonization there were other elaborate theories that were framed one of the most interesting is the one that came along about the mid to late nineteenth century that the colonized people are biologically backward biologically undeveloped the savages that the inferior level of cultural evolution this assumes they have an inferior level is commensurate with an inferior biological evolution none other than Charles Darwin himself you know I learned in school that Herbert Spencer was the social Darwinist remember Herbert Spencer in the school of social Darwinism where they took

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of social Darwinism where they took Darwin's scientific findings and they applied them to the economy well when I read Darwin I found that the Darwin himself was a social Darwinist he had all these kinds of theories about how naturally inferior these people were well how were they really culturally inferior their architectural skills horticulture crafts hunting fishing technology midwifery medicines herbs and their tribal democratic practices were often much better more advanced much more an object of admiration than anything that could have been found in Europe at that time I mean we mustn't romanticize these original societies some of which did have unjust and cruel practices of their own but generally you know I looked at them when I say you know where they lag behind mostly were they lag behind 16th 17th 18th and 19th century Europe this is the list I could come up with hangings murders syphilis gonorrhea smallpox typhoid bubonic plague poverty both urban and rural slavery prostitution religious wars and inquisitional witch hunts those areas I would say Europe took first place in those century the poverty the poverty of Central America in the third-world masses of people crowded into urban slums living utter destitution in rural villages at times illiteracy unemployment hunger disease comes because the land is given over to commercial cash export crops then absentee

ownership it comes because they're growing coffee sugar beef for export instead of beans and rice for indigenous consumption home consumption domestic consumption the labor and the resources of Central America are devoted

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resources of Central America are devoted to one thing primarily capital accumulation especially emphasis on the labor I gave the example once of El Salvador I was looking at who's in El Salvador you know was in El Salvador the fortune 500 everybody Cargill General Motors all these corporations are down there in Central America harvester Chase Manhattan in El Salvador and I said what's in El Salvador some sugar some cotton what are they all doing there and they're down there for that other ingredient in the productive process the one that really creates a surplus value which is human labor and the Salvadoran workers are producing everything from energy rods to baby powder to cooking powder baking powder rubber tires computers automobile parts all this is being done for other consumption markets it's called outsourcing where the companies go down and bring the stuff and use the cheap labor and all those transportation costs to do that make it worth it it's still more profitable to do that and to have those things put together in El Salvador than in Ohio because in Ohio you pay people \$10 an hour and down there you pay them 60 cents an hour so the labor and resources are devoted to one thing primarily capital accumulation self sustenance and self-employment gives way to wage labor and that pattern is very striking in the third world throughout the third world from 1970 to 1980 the number of wage workers in the third world grew from 72 million to 120 million and the rate is accelerating that same pattern exists in the United States back in the middle of the last century or early part of the 1800s seventy-five percent of this population u.s. population was self-employed today it's about eight percent I mean it's been a gradual decline 48 2015 we go right down down about eight now and many self-employed people are really

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many self-employed people are really self employed on the sufferance of some other larger supplier the essence of capital investment is not to uplift the country or develop it not to bring civilization those are the patronizing ethnocentric rationales that are given when we do hear that the developed countries North must help the underdeveloped countries what does underdeveloped mean it means [___] in some way you just didn't go through a certain process they're not as capable of evolving they need aid they need Peace Corps volunteers to show them how to do things they need missionaries and movies in McDonald's and Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse especially Mickey Mouse and be cognizant that underdeveloped carries some negative connotations the third world nations and the UN and the Wall Street Journal and most communist parties in the world publications left right and center all now use another term which I do not ever use in my writings a slightly less insulting but hilariously inaccurate term they're called developing nations so they're just late bloomers I use third-world because I find developing to be a very deceptive term a euphemistic way of saying underdeveloped it presumes that poverty was an original condition it presumes that these countries are developing and in fact in many of them the conditions getting worse the people in these countries don't need to be taught how to farm they need the land to farm in the implements they don't need to be taught how to fish they know how to fish they need the boats in the nets and access to shore frontage and bays and oceans they need someone to stop the chemical plants from dumping their toxic infusions into the waters and rivers they don't need to be convinced that they should use hygienic standards they

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they should use hygienic standards they don't need a Peace Corps volunteer to tell them that to tell them to boil their water especially when they can't find any wood to light a fire with they need the conditions that will allow them to have clean drinking water and clean clothes and homes they don't need nutritional advice on balanced diets from North Americans they need food and they usually know better than the North Americans what foods serve their nutritional needs usually under development what's called under development is a condition which is forcefully imposed on these countries through history one of the most dramatic examples

is India in 1810 India was exporting more textiles finished mass-market textiles not just those beautiful exquisite silks that we always associate with Indian mass-market textile was exporting more textiles to England than England was exporting to India and more to China and more to Egypt more to number of other places in 1810 by 1830 the British had put up prohibitive barriers and blocked out Indian Goods and had moved in and were dumping their goods in and within a matter of another 10 years the great textile centers of Dhaka and Madras were turned into ghost towns and the people was sent back out on the land to do what to raise the cotton the raw materials that would be used in the factories of Manchester and Lancashire in London so that India was reduced to being a cow like much of the third world to be milked and not to be developed and by 1850 India's debt had grown to 53 million pounds and from 1850 to 1900 the per capita income in India dropped by 2/3 almost 2/3 65% that's an incredible drop

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almost 2/3 65% that's an incredible drop so we always associate India with poverty the master party that's not their original condition is not an underdeveloped country England underdeveloped India Ireland is another example Ireland is a country that's not usually associated with the third world well it's the first colony England's very first it was the first imperialism goes back to what 13th century 14th century whatever angles was in Ireland spent some time there Frederick angles call Marx's collaborator for the benefit of some who might not recognize the name in 1856 he wrote quote how often have the Irish started out to achieve something and every time they have been crushed politically and industrially by consistent oppression they have been artificially converted into an utterly poverty very interesting words artificially converted and so the same with Central America artificially converted the maeín Indians in guatemalan had a better diet they had more calories more protein and better conditions of health in the early 16th century before the Europeans came than they do have today they had more artists more musicians more architects more horticulturalists than they do today they are not underdeveloped they've been over exploited they've been mal developed the legacy of u.s. economic dominance is not only hunger and strife and misery but an economic structure that bears very little functional relationship to the needs of Central America of the people of Central America the most important characteristic of the region's economy is that it's dominated by a network of international corporations which themselves are beholden to parent companies that have their place in North

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companies that have their place in North America Europe and Japan roughly in that order especially in North America if there's there any harmonization by the way these interests it's it's with the global investor classes between them they're harmonizing their interests that's what's getting integrated not the indigenous economies of these countries NAFTA the North American Free Trade Agreement is an attempt to rationalize this it gives the total green light it wipes away whatever political controls that democratic forces have been able to institute NAFTA will not integrate the economies you hear that talk all the time these economies are going to be integrated her John Chancellor that fatuous commentated wisdom peddler saying well there was a time when we had small villages and we had to move to a regional economy then a regional economy was enough we had to move to a national economy and now we're all going to have to move to a global economy just that's all simple is that that's all it is a benign ordinary development it's not an integration into a global economy because these capital investments untrammelled ins they are actually fragment the productive forces in these countries any productive forces that operate for the needs of the people just look by with us look at our own country just look at what free trade and mobility of capital has done to the industrial Midwest of the US we now even have a term for we call the Rust Belt it's a remarkable to admission isn't it what just but it's something it just happened you see the Central American economies like those in most places in the third world remain fragmented and unintegrated both between each other between countries and within themselves both in the flow of capital and goods and in technology and organization a global economy a world economy that has little to do with the needs of the people of the world that's a rather remarkable thought when you think about him the

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thought when you think about him the other legacy of economic domination is political suppression and unspeakable atrocities the counterinsurgency funded and led by the United States in El Salvador against a broadly based liberation movement led to the deaths of what by now maybe 70,000 Salvadorans killed many thousands more believed to be murdered by right-wing death squads five hundred and forty thousand and fled into exile another quarter of a million have been displaced or forced into resettlement camps this is all one little country of Salvador a country of only four million people but just about everybody has been directly or indirectly affected as either suffered death or suffered a terrible loss of loved ones or close ones the Salvadoran Army massacred whole villages suspected of being sympathetic to the guerrillas an eyewitness victim interview taken by then congresswoman Barbara Mikulski of a Salvadoran peasant woman quote many members of my family were killed I saw children around the age of eight being raped and then the soldiers would take their bayonets and make mincemeat out of them with their guns they would shoot at their faces the army cut people up and put soap and coffee in their stomachs as a mocking they would slit the stomach of a pregnant woman and take the child out as if they were taking eggs out of an iguana that is what I saw and yell Salvador today in the US media and by our US political leaders is called a democracy Manuel de Concha a peasant leader in Brazil was arrested by the Brazilian security police when them Quinton ran Brazil police who had been schooled at u.s. army bases in the his methods of counterinsurgency and interrogation for his crime of protesting the economic conditions of

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protesting the economic conditions of his life and of his people this is how Manuel was treated for four months I was heavily tortured by the Army in Rio de Janeiro and then in the naval Information Center near death I was taken to the hospital for the sixth time the beatings had been so severe that my body was one big bruise the blood clotted under my skin in all the hair on my body fell out they pulled out all my fingernails they poked needles through my sexual organs and used a rope to drag me across the floor by my testicles right afterwards they hung me upside down by my ankles they hung me handcuffed from a grating and tied my penis so I could not urinate they forced me to stand for three days without food or drink they gave me so many drugs that my eardrums burst and I am impotent they nailed my penis to a table for 24 hours they tied me up like a pig and threw me into a pool so that I nearly drowned they put me in a completely dark cell where I remained for 30 days urinating and defecating in the same place where I had to sleep they fed me only bread soaked in water they put me in a rubber box and turned on a siren for three days I neither ate nor slept and I nearly went mad this was done by the defenders of the Western world by the fenders of the freeway you see the free market with the aid and the training of the CIA and other such groups victims of these military and police but defenders of democracy were financed by the US tortured people with electric shock they forced victims and this is in El Salvador and in no Guatemala Honduras not in Panama not in Nicaragua not in Cuba these are the things they force

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Cuba these are the things they force victims to witness the torture of friends and relatives including children they raped women in the presence of other family members they burn sexual organs with acid or scalding water they place rats in women's vaginas and into the mouths of of other prisoners they mutilated punctured and cut off various parts of the body including genitalia eyes and tongue they injected air into woman's breasts and into veins causing slow painful death they shove bayonets and clubs into the vagina or in the case of men into the anus causing rupture and death and I have other descriptions that make that one look almost mild but I'm going to skip them I think you get the idea yet I would argue that imperialism is rational it harnesses these cruel and horrible and twisted impulses it enlists them it instigates them it instigates them these guys weren't born torturers I mean they didn't go around and say who's been ripping out the arms of rabbits and chickens you can come work for us they took ordinary guys and said we are going to train you as professionals and torturers have testified that we are professionals we use certain methods to get some to elicit information and we have to do this and it's it's a tough job and all that and the guys who financed them or sit in Langley Virginia say yeah heck I mean you know it's a jungle out there I don't know I'm not that happy about the kind of methods we sometimes have to use but when you're facing these tough kind of

people you got to use the same methods they do and so forth so on hmm in other words you always justify your crimes by saying that your victim was the criminal that's a rational process of training torturers for what is a rational set of interests they didn't go down there for torturing just for the sake of torture they use torture in order to be down there and stay down there and defend their

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stay down there and defend their privileges and their interests I want to make that point because sometimes imperial domination is explained as arising from the will to dominate and in a desire for territorial expansion a territorial imperative but in fact territorial imperialism is not the dominant mode it hasn't been in generations today there's a very relatively little colonial Dominion I mean the u.s. controls Puerto Rico Guam a few other places what you have today is neo imperialism where the country has its nominal independence its own president in his own currency in its own police moat and all you do is you control its exports and imports its land as we did with Cuba sugar tobacco its tourist trade and all those other things you allow them the trappings of sovereignty while you control the wealth I heard someone at the World Affairs Council I went there to hear a friend speak and someone got up from the audience a lot of academics and professionals and all that world affairs council types and he said well you know ironically Cuba has come full cycle since the days before the Revolution before the Revolution the tourist trade was only for the Yankees the hotels & beaches were only for the foreigners and the Cubans needed Yankee dollars to use them and today it's the same thing ironically Cuba is back to its pre-revolutionary position there are beaches for foreigners the dollar beaches Aviv dollars you know cos Cuba is so strapped for hard currency there are hotels where following a stay the Cubans couldn't afford it they don't have the dollars and all right so it's the same and I got up and I said no it's not the same because the surplus value or the profits of the pre-revolutionary trade went to big corporations gamblers mobsters whorehouse owners and the like

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mobsters whorehouse owners and the like generals on the take and such and today the surplus value that is received by the Cubans goes to the government what the Cubans have done is they said we have so few hard currency resources one of them is our Sun and our beautiful beaches and all that let's try to start a tourist trade and make that a source of hard currency and that's where we do where that money goes back to the people and pays for their health clinics and their education and these other things so Cuba is not in the same place if Cuba work in exactly the same place it was before the Revolution this government will be hugging and kissing the Cubans they'd be giving support like they do to shove a Nazi or Yeltsin or Havel on one of those people we wouldn't still have the blockade in the embargo and squeezing them as is until that surplus value until every penny of it goes back to the fuel and is taken out of the hands of the many there will be antagonism toward Cuba the US policy to a Central America for almost two centuries has consisted of the three eyes interference invasion and investment not the outgrowth of any kind of democratic national dialogue or consensus between the American people and their leaders it's not the response to democratic pressure it's not the result of mass jingoism a longing for invasion or power expansion of war or popular hysteria the history books tell us that about the spanish-american war that it was a popular hysteria I've done my study of it most people in 1898 weren't interested in going to war they were trying to get jobs the labor movement in the US had very little interest in the overseas expansion and in fact was for the most part opposed not all the same with the Gulf War they very jingo war in July 90 most Americans the opinion polls showed most Americans

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the opinion polls showed most Americans favorite negotiated settlements which is what the Iraqis also favored it was only after several months of media war hysteria and White House war hysteria and hyping it up and pumping it up and the actual commitment of troops and the promise of a quick easy win that the US public got on its yellow ribbon binge and even at the time some of you may remember I said they're going to develop a postpartum depression they're going to come down Yellow Ribbon high and the American people

have the habit of then drifting off into reality and they have to forcefully be shoved back to face the harsh illusions of the ruling elites and indeed that happen with conqueror George Bush the guy who has had a 93 percent approval rating by the end of it couldn't even beat Bill Clinton in the election so that kind of jingle isn't when it is hyped up is ephemeral and short-lived in other words these policies of invasion interference and an investment do not come because we want them I make this point because it's an important thing I remember being at the City University of New York on a panel Michael Harrington was on it knew speaking and somebody from the audience said Michael why is us farm policy so stupid to Michael Harrington and Michael Harrington said well we are the good Germans we have this power thing we are the busy parties and we try to go here and there when we shouldn't and we he went on and I responded I said you know I have to disagree with that maybe the confusion is in using this word we we don't make this policy they do and the policy isn't stupid it's remarkably successful and brutal for their in their interest it's stupid to us because it does it doesn't do anything for us is it's cost us money it doesn't give us

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it's cost us money it doesn't give us anything but Wars and tribulations and all but it's very useful for they so maybe we should stop saying we do this and we go there it's a very rational policy to support governments that are open to US corporate interests and to oppose or overthrow governments be they communist or populist or whatever that have some measure of independent development and some measure of redistribution of surplus-value even the country like Iraq even a country like Libya where there's some redistribution of surplus-value that is the country that will be targeted that is the criteria in every instance for the most part and to many analysts the late Michael Harrington used this word we Howard Zinn uses we I notice I've got to tell Howard about this sometime Noam Chomsky uses we in his weaker quicker moments Ramsey Clark my Ramsey Clark gets up and gives these brilliant powerful moving talks about Iraq and what he's done he's keep saying we and we've done this to them and we've done that of them I want to Ramsey Ramsey I'm sitting missing or wasn't we know we should stop saying wait and this is more than semantics it's really in a very important point because it is defining political reality because those who keep saying we might often fall into the mistake of treating the nation as the basic unit of analysis and International Affairs sometimes it is but often it isn't even sometimes in simple nation state territorial rivalries the issues are defined by political economic elites who are less likely to serve the interests of the general populace and more likely to define their own interests as the general interest and every time you say we they love it you're playing right into their hands these policies don't just happen there is conscious will pursuing a conscious

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is conscious will pursuing a conscious goal and conscious intent and conscious interest is it true brothers and sisters that unlike the rest of us the rich and powerful don't act with conscious intent not only economic policy doesn't happen the economy itself just doesn't happen I mean the economy what is the economy you ever think I mean strictly speaking there's no such thing as the economy nobody has ever seen an economy you cannot touch or see or feel an economy what you can see are people engaged in exchange of values in productive labor and in not such productive labor and we take all these different actualities and activities and we take them together and we form what is called a hypothetical construct and we abstract from that we call that the economy it's a hypothetical construct abstracted from observable or actuality now our abstractions are very powerful things like other abstractions this one becomes reified entry you see first you abstract from the reality and then you endow it with a mechanical reality promote above its own sort of a conceptual Jurassic Park or something so now we talk about the economy as a self-generating force the problems of the economy not the problems of capitalism not the problems of what the corporation's are doing to us with the problems of the economy the economy becomes an entity of its own so we hear statements like the economy is in a slump the economy is in the doldrums you get the image of this big bulky moody economy the economy is making a comeback like a sports hero the one that always catches my attention the economy is acting funny

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you are listening to author and political analyst Michael Parenti on the sword and the dollar at the end of the program there will be information on how to obtain a copy of this talk we do the same thing with the whole concept of nation it's reified and abstracted what the nation does what the United States does this in the United States does that and we do this and when we get us out into that so we are reifying even when we say we we should start asking when we hear one of our leaders or our media pundits say our interest necessitate this action or we're looking out for US interests what are US interests by the way that question first started to intrigue me back in 1967 I was writing my first book and I sat I was a postdoctoral fellow at Yale University and I sat in the Sterling Memorial Library and I went through about 30 volumes of the Department of State bulletins and huge volumes of these bulletins you know what I was looking for I was looking for what US interests were was the night of the Vietnam War and I kept hearing about was our interest us interest so I said I kind of find out what these interests are and I went through these volumes they answered they remember the librarian said what are you looking for you I know you don't take any notes you look at you keep getting volume ten eleven twelve fourteen hundred and seven and I'm going through looking for finally I came across one instance of yours interest that's very interesting when it was mentioned that US presence would be taken as a u.s. interest you see so we said it is in our interest to maintain a presence in that area right I found was William Bundy State Department officials said it is now interest to maintain our military bases in the Philippines I came off my seat here it is US interest I'm going to find out finally is to maintain these bases now that's very interesting because normally

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that's very interesting because normally you would have thought the bases were there to maintain US interests but now we hear that US interests u.s. interest is to maintain the basis the instrumental value becomes its own end value a common thing in human thought in old man and then one day he went on he said but there's a more important US interest in the Philippines this is the only one I only example I could find all these volumes and again I went even further to the edge of my seat now my palms were getting kind of sweaty from the excitement and I quote what he said he was speaking to an audience in Manila toward a us and Filipino elite audience in Manila and he said the Philippines means so much to the United States because the Filipino people have so often demonstrated that across barriers of oceans and cultures this is a country the Philippines where Americans are always as Filipinos so often say made to feel quote at home the touching statement at home is a peculiarly Filipino phrase against in other words if I understood Bundy most important interest in the Philippines was the preservation and Filipino hospitality by the way there there wasn't the dry eye in the audience I imagine well one could say look Parenti this complaint about the mass of the people not making policy is a truism it's true of all public policy it's not formulated by the masses you'll be loving masses whom you idealize average people have a low level of information by any objective measurement they have no input in the policy process government policy both domestic and foreign almost always are almost always has its origin in elite circles political economic elites think tanks the higher circles of government and

[00:40:00 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=2400s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=2400s)

the higher circles of government and corporate worlds the council Foreign Relations the Trilateral Commission the bankers the CEOs the investors the top managers that publicist the policy specialists the journalists all these kinds of high-powered personages they're the ones who become the secretaries of state defense Treasury Commerce they become the heads of the CIA in the National Security Council they monopolize policy they create policy the most we can help for from the public the argument continues is that at election time it gives its stamp of approval or disapproval to one or another policy elite so the argument goes this by the way this model of elite democracy was enunciated by many Joseph Schumpeter by Walter Lippmann and the like most recently by conservative political scientists like Diane Ziegler and by the great political theorist a sparrow Agnew and I knew I was going to get a laugh by than just saying that name in response I would say not true it's not true that all policy originates with policy elites an ounce of data is worth a pound of polemic I would say I would say just the opposite that almost all policy that is worthwhile all policy that is worthwhile all of it that is life-affirming all of it that is democratic in its substantive output all that policy

has come from the common ordinary people the struggle for women's rights the struggle for women's rights for a hundred years what presidents what presidents what cabinet members what high power policy specialists what one in that hundred years name one that came out for women's rights and talked about it who there was one there was one the way from one Eleanor Roosevelt she was the wife of a president that's the closest women got to it the struggle for civil rights what what one name name the great policy

[00:42:02 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=2522s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=2522s)

what one name name the great policy leaders the great political economic financial leaders at least who what one of them twelve years in the White House FDR never once came out for fppc Fair Employment Practice Commission never once came out against Jim Crow Harry S. Truman finally did but he reluctantly in very marginal ways JFK was downright opposed to Martin Luther King's mobilization March on Washington and he wished that the whole civil rights agitation could have gone away because it led to uncomfortable schisms in the face of his support name the political economic elites of the 19th century who fought for and not against the 10-hour day namely elites who fought for the eight-hour day who originated who got the idea who generated who built the base who brought forth all the pamphlets and and the calls and the organizations and everything else who faced up to the police name the political economic elites who fought for the right to collective bargaining name them Franklin Roosevelt it finally came out with a collective bargaining bill the National Labor Relations Act that was a SAP he was tossing out he had no idea that the people in America were going to grab it and go on into industrial unions ation millions of people were going to want to move suddenly because collective bargaining and the right to have unions was now legal they could face their town sheriff's and state militia and police feeling they had the federal government behind them but that was only after years and years of agitation there at the other end of the policy process when it comes to Democratic policy reluctantly responding to it name name the great policy political leaders and captains of industry name them who struggled for public education who struggled to end child labor who struggled for clean and safe drinking water so there couldn't be no more typhoid epidemics in Philadelphia and Baltimore places like that who struggled

[00:44:01 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=2641s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=2641s)

Baltimore places like that who struggled for safe housing codes who struggled for public parks there were individuals some of them from privileged backgrounds by the way who fought for those things were usually not when they were in government they were in government they couldn't fall for them if these were the things that the rich and the powerful had wanted they wouldn't have to be you wouldn't say the struggle for this the struggle for that they would have just had him he would have had to struggle for them and so today named who were the big who the big political leaders right in the last 20 years named them who originated the environmental movement only when that movement got a mass base that you find a vice president wrote a book about it name them this came from the public from the concerns of lay persons from lay organizations like this one self-supporting that after have bake sales and and speeches in and whatever else to grab money together to have some visibility and organization to push for this thing devoted to pressuring the Environmental Protection Agency to do what it should be doing anyway an Environmental Protection Agency that was created only in response to those pressures to try to sort of give him the impression that government was looking after this thing after well the consumer protection market who started that I'll tell you started consumers started getting unsafe products and medications off the market that's not what a capitalist government does taking goods off the market the function of a capitalist government is to get things on the market it's too busy doing that getting things on the market with subsidies and export supports even for lethal tobacco products and investment tax breaks free research and development for the corporate producers that's what governments busy doing they're generating that kind of policy they're too busy to protect the consumer the consumer has to protect herself and himself the ban on tobacco and liquor

[00:46:00 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=2760s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=2760s)

himself the ban on tobacco and liquor advertising who originated that idea tell me the fearless political leader who went up against the tobacco lobby and said I got a new original idea we're going to ban you no no it was down here it was down here and here and it has to percolate up and finally push them and push them to do something maybe you have more power than you realize the anti-nuclear movement don't tell me that was government the government was up to its ears in hiding and hiding the crimes the toxic waste to fallout the murder of GIs and down winders in Utah and atomic energy workers in the plans hiding how they were dying like flies from exposure they were too busy hiding it to be fighting the unsafe features of the nuclear movement the Freedom of Information Act who or the political leaders named one who came out for that that was the public demand government's job is not to free information government's job is to restrict to seal files to put them on the security not open to the public inking out manipulating and changing history keeping us from knowing what they did so reaffirming to you again and again that what they do is legitimate and honest and wise and true but not letting you know what they did or why they did it and giving you the document with 2/3 of it inked out their job is to undermine the Freedom of Information Act our job is to fight for it if government were really interested in protecting the public interest rather than the private power structure in the private profit ears now I don't want to overstate it policy elites have played a creative role in some areas but it's very important to be balanced those said Parenti you should be balanced we've had 98% of the other side and your 2% is just too truthful and it's tipping the scales too much so let's give them credit let's try to be balanced the thing policy elites have play to create a role the Manhattan Project to build an

[00:48:00 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=2880s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=2880s)

a role the Manhattan Project to build an atomic bomb the nuclear industry then hand it over to private business at a fraction of its cost and subsidize repeatedly billions of dollars every year the creativeness FBI CIA the national security state apparatus the global military apparatus 300 major bases around the world and by the way talk about closing bases how about starting to close overseas bases all the focus is on the domestic bases close the open they closed one in the Philippines and that's because it took a volcano to kind of turn it to trash it and then the Filipino Senate said close it then they finally closed one McCarthyism ideological witch-hunts loyalty and security programs these were all started by our native policy elites far eight programs to military dictators and torturers those electric shock instruments that they use to put on the genitals of peasant leaders those were made and brought down there by the CIA that's a lot of Technology in hardware getting into Wars creating crises that justify military intervention the secret surveillance of our personal lives intervention in Guatemala El Salvador Nicaragua the invasion of Panama Grenada Iraq the move into Somalia remember the mass movement of people demonstrating the streets please let's send troops to Somalia but did you remember that I guess we were all away that weekend northern so they can show their creative in death squads torture squads bombings and missiles policies that control destroy dominate and manipulate I'm giving you a picture here now whose interest do they serve if certain kinds of life-affirming policies have to be struggled with and fought for and you have to take every little bit right out of it teeth in them they're greedy little paws whereas these other policies that doing all the time we have to struggle then to find out even that the policy happened what is it they're doing they're too busy practicing militarism and fascism in order to

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militarism and fascism in order to bolster capitalism all the while claiming to be saving democracy from communism or now to save democracy from demon dictators warlords terrorists and the like Joseph Schumpeter wrote the conservative economist that capitalism means peace that imperialism exists because it's a residue of the old swashbuckling feudal times the Colonel blimp thing that in fact here's his quote industrial and commercial activity is essentially unheroic in the ninth sense and the ideology that glorifies the idea of fighting for fighting sake understandably withers in the office among all the columns of figures capitalism is too busy just getting that bottom line together and producing doing that stuff to go off on these silly imperialism's now is he serious he was writing this the early part of this century when British imperialism was at its height and US imperialism was taking off don't underestimate the ability of class apologists to fabricate images out of whole cloth he was writing at a time when the soldier clerk sneeze India Company

with their accounting books in one hand in the Gatling guns and other were killing Indians when the various European capitalist states were engaged in bloody wars with each other about carving up the third world and Africa Asia Latin America whatever else but by the way as ridiculous as he sounds he's no different from what we hear today other conservative theorists right off empire it's just as a general impulse to dominate but doesn't explain why they want to dominate some people rather than other people we hear a lot that it was George Bush's macho impulses that led him to go invade Panama by the

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that led him to go invade Panama by the way I have no doubt that he was considering his macho image in the polls and all that and how that would work but it doesn't explain why he hit Panama why doesn't he go and invade Mexico or Canada or whatever it doesn't explain why certain kinds of countries are hit I'm sure Clinton's bombing of Iraq was his presidential blooding and macho flexing of muscles he can't stand up to the Senate Judiciary Committee so he turns around he goes out killed some more Iraqis show so that he's tough I mean why is this macho impulse going and always on the side of the landowners this need to dominate what is always going on inside of the corporate investors rather than on the side of the peasants the workers the students and the clergy who want social change I mean Robin Hood was macho he was macho you can be macho many different ways for many different causes macho for peace macho for equality macho for treating women with respect in humanity what's left out of such impulse theory is the whole matrix of class and corporate interests such theories divorce politics from economics and attach them to a kind of homespun a historical psycho politics or psychologism shrimp ada is much better when he talks about ancient imperialism ones that didn't involve his own particular class listen to what he says about ancient Rome Rome pursued that policy which pretends to aspire to peace but unerringly generates war the policy of continual preparation for war the policy of meddlesome interventionism there was no corner of the known world where some interest was not alleged to be in danger or under actual attack if the interest were not Roman they were those of Rome's allies and if Rome had no allies then allies would be invented when it was utterly impossible to contrive such an interest why then it

[00:54:00 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=3240s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=3240s)

contrive such an interest why then it was the National Honor that had been insulted the fight was always invested with an aura of legality Rome was always being attacked by evil minded neighbors always fighting for breathing space the whole world was pervaded by a host of enemies and was manifestly Rome's duty to guard against their indubitably aggressive designs they were enemies who only waited to fall upon the Roman people now does that sound familiar at all clearly now these are the rationales for expansion but they're not the motives they're not the actual real interest well we hear that today that there's a world out there of adversaries who are just waiting to fall upon the American people they don't for some reason fall upon Denmark they don't fall upon Spain or Brazil but they fall upon us but soon fade it I said he was very good about ancient imperialism he says the real motives in Rome not all these manufactured incidents motives can only be understood by looking at quote what domestic class interests benefitted from the Empire those who gain with the aristocracy of landlords agricultural entrepreneurs born of struggle against their own people whose dominance rested on control of the state machine he had it right on target Schumpeter the conservative had a Marxist analysis of ancient Rome because it was 2,000 years away he felt comfortable enough to say the truth now that's not a Marxist analysis that just happens to be reality March didn't invent that he just discovered that it was one of the people to state it the historian Ernst baby an adze to the idea about ancient Rome he said no Administration in history has ever devoted itself so wholeheartedly to fleecing its subjects for the private benefit of its ruling class as did Rome

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benefit of its ruling class as did Rome he was writing before the Bush Reagan Clinton era well let me end right here and say that what we should do what is to be done and I'm not going to answer anymore what can we do questions I'm going to answer them right now is we must above all emphasize the costs of empire to

our own people to point out that we have a community of interests not with that Wayne we talked about up there not with the Veii but we have a community interest with the common people of these other countries the incredible tax burden that we bear the military burden the subsequent starvation of human services and things the price this has affected on us in terms of crime poverty and underemployment the environmental costs this huge military establishment is the single biggest polluter in America the US Air Force Army Navy the distorting effects of on the economy and technology the exportation of jobs the threat to democracy that comes from a national security state the surveillance the secrecy the irresponsible state power the suppression of dialogue the wars and the killings that some of our young people come back as victims in plastic bags to so we must emphasize that these policies are not supporting our interests it's not just a matter but be noble be sacrificing be caring for the poor little people there you tell people this and if they have a suspicion that their own interests are involved and the government is supporting their interests then they'll choose their interests over and against any noble sentiments about other people but if you point out how in fact this government is no way in no way supporting their interests then they

[00:58:00 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=3480s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJG3XMh94gQ&t=3480s)

supporting their interests then they sometimes begin to listen and so we must educate agitate organize demonstrate support alternative media alternative organizations and pressure our officials try what we can to break the ideological monopoly there is immense ideological monopoly on Foreign Affairs you can get debate about some issues you know toxic waste dumps health care this that it is almost impossible to get any debate on foreign policy other than tactical strategic so you know the kind of thing you hear in those Sunday afternoon TV panel discussions you have you cannot get people raising the questions of the kind of race today people of this persuasion do not get on the mass media we must above all deny the community of interest with the rulers see who our enemies really are our enemies are those who profess to be our leaders our enemies are amidst us in our living rooms every evening on the TV set challenge the ideological totalitarian monopoly of government and media it ain't easy because they do control most of it the monopoly that does not allow this kind of critique to come before the American people push for things like Panama deception an Academy award-winning movie documentary that was suppressed completely in the mass media shown only on KQED PBS or a few evenings and only them because there's a reform movement at KQED see they didn't do it regardless of but because of that challenge in above all don't worry about your legitimacy and credibility the way to win credibility is to speak the truth as forcefully and clearly as possible it's one thing to tone down the rhetoric it's another thing to dilute the content never dilute the content never blunt your sword as forcefully as clearly as possible speak the truth as I hope I've done

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speak the truth as I hope I've done today thank Oh

END